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ABSTRACT

This curriculum guide for secondary grades encourages new young voters to understand and participate in the political system. A major objective is to help students consider the political system as an agent of change, and, moreover, to help them understand how individuals control, influence, and change government. Students learn that there are many ways to change laws and that one of the most effective ways is through the ballot. Focus is upon exercising voting responsibility. Teaching techniques attempt to involve students in discussion and participation through activity suggestions. Three major sections comprise the three week mini-course which, being suggestive rather than prescriptive, can be adapted to a longer or shorter period of time. I. "Why Government?" offers concepts, challenges, and purposes of government. II. "How to effect change in government" analyzes needs and methods for changing laws. III. "How do I become involved?" examines reasons for and insights into political parties and offers specific instructions to young people on how to register and vote. (SJM)

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YOU AND THE SYSTEM:

AN ALTERNATIVE TO REVOLUTION

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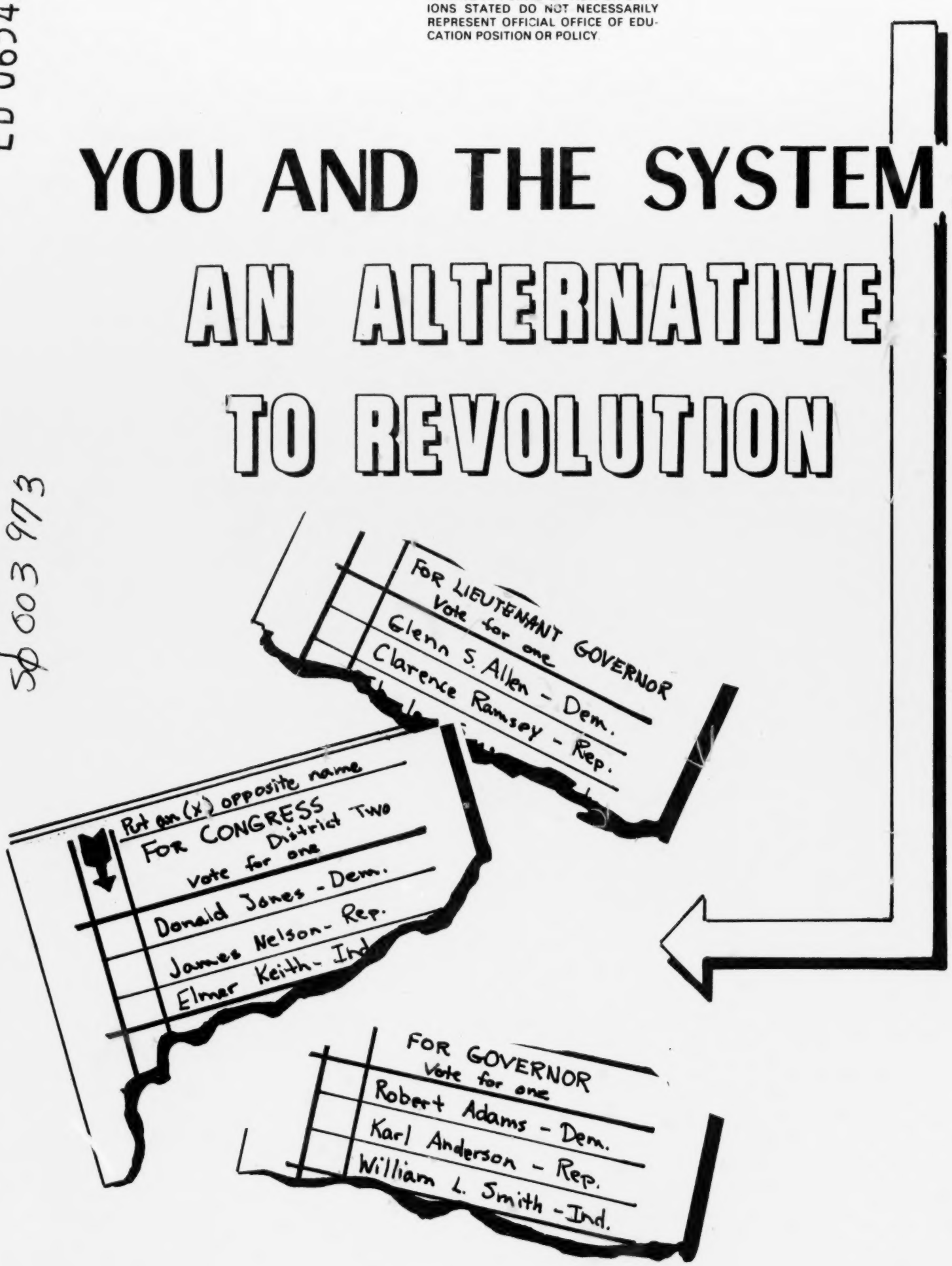

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February 28, 1972

TO: Those Who Have Received YOU AND THE SYSTEM: AN ALTERNATIVE TO REVOLUTION

FROM: Ed Walker, Consultant in Social Studies

RE: Involvement of politically registered voters in party organization

This memo, as an addendum to YOU AND THE SYSTEM: AN ALTERNATIVE TO REVOLUTION, is to bring to your attention, and the attention of new young voters, the specific procedures provided by state law for involvement in political parties in Nebraska.

COUNTY CONVENTION

A voter registered with a political party can file as a delegate to the county convention of that party by filling out an application for nomination at the county clerk or election commissioner's office.

There is no filing fee.

The deadline for filing is sixty days before the primary (Deadline - March 10, 1972 --- Primary - May 9, 1972).

The purpose of the county convention is to organize the county for the next two years by electing a chairman and other executive officers and central committee members (a man and woman from each precinct), to elect delegates to the state convention and to write a county platform on issues.

STATE CONVENTION

Delegates to the state convention are elected at the county conventions in numbers porportionate to the vote received by the presidential candidate of that party in the last presidential election.

The time and place of the convention is set by each state party but must be held by October 1, 1972.

Time and place for the 1972 Republican State Convention have not yet been set. (Watch your newspaper.) The Democratic State Convention will be in Lincoln on June 24 and 25, 1972.

The purpose of the state convention is to organize the state for the next two years by electing a chairman, national committeeman and national committeewoman and any other executive committee members and a state central committee (a man and woman from each of the 49 legislative districts, to elect alternate-delegates to the national convention, to select electoral college electors in presidential years and to write a state platform on issues).

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Delegates to the national conventions are elected on the primary ballot and candidates for these offices must file by the same date as county convention delegates and all other candidates which is 60 days before the primary (March 10, 1972 --- Deadline, May 9, 1972 --- Primary).

Filing fee is $10.00.

Delegates are elected by Congressional Districts in numbers based on the vote for the presidential candidate of that party in the last presidential election. For 1972, the following numbers would apply:

	Republican	Democrat
1st District	6	8
2nd District	4	8
3rd District	6	6
	16	22

Delegates to the national conventions must either commit to a presidential candidate or run uncommitted. Either the name of the presidential candidate or the word "uncommitted" appears on the ballot with the candidate for delegates' name. Committed delegates are bound to support their candidate for at least the first two ballots at the national convention or until their candidate receives less than 35% of the roll call vote or unless their candidate releases them.

The Republican National Convention will be at San Diego, California, August 20-24, 1972.

The Democratic National Convention will be at Miami Beach, Florida, July 10-14, 1972.

YOU AND THE SYSTEM: AN ALTERNATIVE TO REVOLUTION

Developed by:

League of Women Voters
Mrs. Willard Rodeck
Mrs. Gerald Barton
Mrs. Richard Trow
Mrs. Milton Waldbaum

and

Mrs. Mary Byington of Pius X High School in Lincoln
Charles S. Davey of Benson High School in Omaha
James Griess, Hastings Senior High School in Hastings

and

Donna Duff, student at Benson High School
Diane Wilson, student at Benson High School
John Hermes, student at Pius X High School

Coordinated by:

Ed Walker, Consultant
History and Social Sciences
Department of Education

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State Department of Education

CECIL E. STANLEY, Commissioner

233 South 10th Street 1972 Lincoln

FOREWORD

With the amendment to the federal Constitution giving eighteen year olds the right to vote, the League of Women Voters of Nebraska was concerned with the need to encourage the new young voters to understand and participate in our political system. The League approached the State Department of Education with the idea of developing a short course for students in high school for this purpose.

Under the direction of the Department of Education's history and social studies consultant, Ed Walker, a group of social studies teachers, high school students and League representatives studied, met, discussed, and developed together the following course for the use of high school teachers in the State of Nebraska.

For the many hours of work and outstanding cooperation, thanks are due to: teachers--Mrs. Mary Byington of Pius X High School in Lincoln; Charles S. Davey of Benson High School in Omaha; and James Griess, Hastings Senior High School in Hastings; students--Donna Duff and Diane Wilson, Benson High School; and John Hermes, Pius X High School. The representatives of the League of Women Voters were Mrs. Willard Rodeck, Lincoln; Mrs. Gerald Barton, Mrs. Richard Trow, and Mrs. Milton Waldbaum, all of Omaha.

INTRODUCTION

Why do we have government? How do we effect change? What are the mechanics of our political system? These are questions our society should be ready to help young voters to answer. This minicourse is designed to explain and encourage young voters to consider the political system as an agent of change.

The course is designed to take approximately three weeks, but it can be expanded by using the suggestions in the activities and also the Appendix. It is suggested that the teacher read through the course first and begin planning such things as the arrangement of speakers and the ordering of films so they can be received about a month in advance.

The film referred to in this unit, Changing the Law, is critical to the ultimate success of the minicourse. We suggest that the teacher should explore all possible avenues to retain the film for classroom use. Our own research indicates that Changing the Law might be secured at one of the three following options:

1. Instructional Media Center
   Extension Division
   University of Nebraska
   Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

2. Your own Educational Service Unit

3. BFA Educational Media
   2211 Michigan Avenue
   Santa Monica, California 90404

   It is coded #10286; purchase price is $275.00;
   rental price is $15.00

If Changing the Law cannot be secured, a narrative of the text is included in the Appendix; however, the narration might be considerably less effective than the film.

A reminder: This minicourse is intended as an option for the teacher desiring to bring to the students a learning activity which will create a positive attitude toward becoming involved in the political system. It should be emphasized that the decision to include this packet, in part or in its entirety, in the curriculum remains wholly within the local school. This minicourse is published as a service for those who see the value of it. It should not be construed as dictum for the schools.

We would advise adapting this course to the individual school. The only suggestions we have are to include each of these three sections: "Why Government?"; "How to Effect Change in Government"; and "How Can I Become Involved?". The teacher should use his own situation to key this course to the needs of his students.

Some problems the teacher may encounter are:

1. Do your school administrators approve of your field trips and/or visitors?

2. Do you want a partisan approach in Section III?

3. Student activity is vital throughout the course--how can you make it so?

4. Planning well in advance for student registration activities.

5. Not forcing conclusions--let student discussion develop them.

6. In Section III, Part 3, paragraph B, number 4, on page 17, the information included is for Douglas County. This is a sample only. The correct information for your locality will have to be researched by the teacher or students.

7. The packet which follows is a combination of direction for the teachers, direction for the student, student materials, and suggestions for further development. <u>You, as the teacher, will have to make decisions concerning which parts of the packet will need to be reproduced for the students</u>.

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SECTION I: WHY GOVERNMENT?

The purpose of the following activities is to help students question why we have a government. The activities should help them to define and clarify the concepts that make up government; help them to learn the skill of problem-solving in small groups; and help them develop an attitude about why we have government.

Part 1 encompasses the concepts and the setting up of a government.
Part 2 involves meeting challenges to test the government the students have developed and the changes they make accordingly.
Part 3 includes what the small groups have learned about the purposes of government and why each of the concepts is a necessary component of all government.

Part 1: Concepts of Government

Give the students the hypothetical situation stated below (or make up your own if you choose), then divide them into groups of no more than five. Before they begin planning their government, you may wish to have them define the five concepts. If you choose, the concepts may be defined for them. Do not give them the challenges until they have made up an outline of government.

Student Introduction: Hypothetical Situation

Fifteen years ago your country was invaded by your worst possible enemy. A war has been fought all this time. Now both of you are sick of fighting and you are ready to talk. Your government was destroyed by the long war so you have to start over. As the planning commission, you must come up with a government that can:

1. get your country back together;

2. withstand the enemy you were fighting;

3. develop institutions that can change with a rapidly changing society.

There are many different interest groups in your country and nobody gets along very well because everyone had their own ideas about the war. No one is very patriotic anymore so the new government will have to prove itself. Also, there is a large population of poor because of the war, and a large number of rich who made money from the war.

Set up your government with the above information in mind. You will probably want to think about the following concepts:

1. Leadership--a spokesman who explains decisions.

2. Institutions--permanent organizations your society has from generation to generation.

3. Ideology--ideas that your nation believes in.

4. Citizenship--duties of people not necessarily directly involved in government.

5. Decision-making--coming to conclusions when given information and alternatives.

Other Suggestions for a Hypothetical Situation

1. People are stranded via a spaceship on an uninhabited planet; set up a new government.

2. Your state breaks away from the Union; set up a new government.

3. Nuclear attack leaves only a small portion of the population; all government is destroyed and you must design a new government.

Part 2: Challenges to Your Government

After you have your government established in theory, test it with the crises stated below. (Note to the teacher: choose as many challenges as you deem necessary.)

1. Instead of a welfare system, you have a set of government communes, where everyone receives equal pay for equal work. According to this arrangement, about three-fourths of the people are not working. What does your government do?

2. Your country has decided to have states pay for all highways. Your state builds a four-lane superhighway from one border to the other. Your neighbor to the east also has a four-lane superhighway, but there is one problem: their highway reaches the border four miles north of yours. What should the government do?

3. You would like to have a representative democracy where everyone votes for an elector in a legislature. But the voters often vote without becoming informed or sometimes they just do not vote. Solution?

4. The enemy has formed an underground conspiracy. They are trying to overthrow your new government from within. How does your government combat this problem?

5. A group of anarchists come to power. They abolish all government. Everything is fine for three weeks because the families maintain order. Then an epidemic of polio strikes. What does your government do? (Remember what anarchy is.)

6. A leader comes to power who takes all power of the central government in order to make split-second decisions in a fast-moving society such as ours. Everything is all right until he decides to declare war on a nation that is suspected of bombing our government embassy in their country.

7. You define freedom as "doing anything you please." You have a free country. How does it go?

8. Before you give any citizen any rights, you make them take on a responsibility first. For instance, you make a person take a factual examination on candidates before he can vote; you make engaged people spend six weeks with a marriage counselor before they can marry; you make people spend three weeks in a cancer research institute before they can smoke. How does this work?

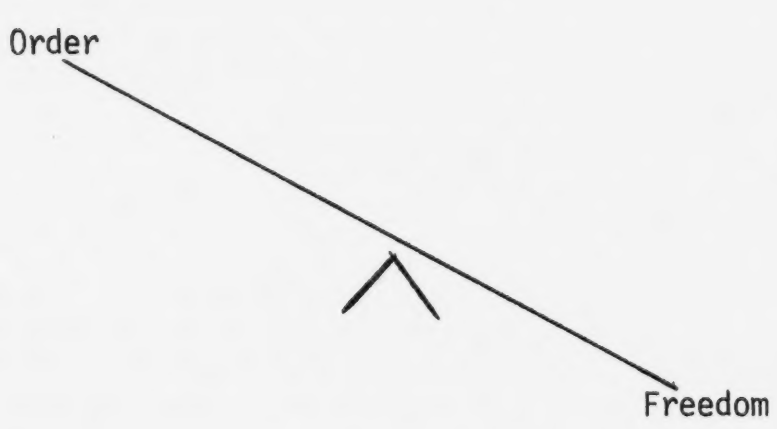
9. Some of your citizens can say what your country stands for, but they don't practice what they preach. How do you change this? To discuss this, you will have to make up a hypothetical idea that your country believes in.

Part 3: Purposes of Government

After students have discussed the challenges, you may want to get them back together to discuss the reasons why we have government. Someone may wish to chart the reasons on the board and vote on their relative importance. In addition, you may wish to have them express their thoughts on the diagram on the following page.

*If you wish to expand this section, it would be appropriate at this point to discuss various types of governmental systems, i.e., federalist, oligarchy, monarchy, etc.

BALANCED GOVERNMENT



ANARCHY

TOTALITARIANISM

SECTION II: HOW TO EFFECT CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT

The activities in this section of the unit are designed to help the student understand some basic questions about government.

1. Why does man create government?
2. How can man control government?
3. How can man change government?
4. What is the best way to effect change under "normal" conditions?

Part 1: Need for Law

To help the students to think about these questions, project the transparency of James Madison's thoughts on government. Perhaps a brief sketch of Madison's life might help to establish him as an authority. Let each student read the quotation; then use the discussion questions to introduce the ideas.

Project Transparency: James Madison on Government

> "If men were angels they would need no government. Since men are men they spend the entirety of their lives trying to control the government they have created."

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between men and angels?
2. Why does Madison make this distinction between men and angels?
3. Why do men create government?
4. What is Madison's fear of government?
5. How can man control the government he has created?

Hopefully, students will begin to see that men need laws to bring order to society but that too much order will result in tyranny. Also, students might see that only a government which is responsible to the people will not get out of control. Do not force the students to see these points. There is still time later in the unit for these ideas to come out.

Part 2: Changing the Law

The following are suggestions for using the film, Changing the Law. If this film is not available to your school, the narration is included in the Appendix. This film presents two ways of changing the law: one is violent and the other follows the democratic procedure.

1. Preview the film: This will help you in planning the follow-up discussion.

2. As the film is shown to students, stop the film just after the violence has occured. Ask students if they think violence would have brought about change.

   *If you want to use the unit for additional study, this part of the film could serve to introduce a discussion on violence in today's world and also whether or not violence can ever be used to change law. You might wish to expand this part of the unit to discuss the concept of revolution and try to determine if revolution can ever be justified. The American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence could be used around which to center discussion. The works of Martin Luther King and Ghandi, as well as Henry David Thoreau will also work here.

Student Introduction to Film

In the previous section, we discussed the need for government. Every society throughout history has chosen to create some form of government. But once created, governments have often used the power they receive to suppress the people's rights. The important question for you, the new voter, is this: How can you control, influence, and change government?

Situation: Suppose the government passes a law with which you disagree. How do you go about changing it? Seal Beach is a California community which passed a surfing ordinance restricting surfing to evening and morning hours. The young people of the community felt that the new law violated their rights and they continued to surf in spite of the ordinance. They practiced civil disobedience. The term civil disobedience refers to nonviolent lawbreaking. To help you decide what is the best way to change those laws with which you disagree, watch the film, Changing the Law. As you watch the film, keep in mind these questions:

1. In the first episode of the film, what method was used to effect change?

2. In the second episode, what method was used?

3. Were there good reasons for the law in this case? List them.

4. When the purpose of the law is compared with the results it obtained, was the law successful?

5. Do you feel that surfers were discriminated against by this law?

6. When the right to surf comes in direct conflict with the right to security of property, which is more important or are they equally important?

7. Do you think the method used by the students in the first episode of the film would have brought results? Why or why not?

8. Will the second method used always bring results? Why or why not?

9. Suppose the city council had refused to compromise, should the students have resorted to violence or is there some other way? (This question is particularly important as it should emphasize the changes that can be made by voting.)

Part 3: Methods of Change

Before the students get involved in the discussions of the questions about the film, let them do a little brainstorming. On a sheet of paper have them list as many ways as they can think of to change law. Remind them that laws are made by governments, and if a government refuses to change a law, maybe a change in government is necessary. This is what the American colonists did in 1776. Take about 5-10 minutes for them to think about this and record their results. After the students have completed their list, ask them for their ideas.

If the class does not have time after the film for the brainstorming, have them record their list at home for discussion the following day.

This activity is designed to get students to understand that while there are many ways to change law, from voting to revolution, that under most circumstances, perhaps all circumstances, violence is unacceptable. This is, of course, a matter of conscience. After each student has compiled his list, use a transparency of the teacher list to see if all of the means are identified, or write them on the board. Be sure that students understand each item.

Transparency: Teacher List

boycott	strike
petition	editorial
letter to official	pamphlet
peaceful protest	riot
sit-in	picket line
demonstrations	nonviolent lawbreaking
voting	anarchy
lobbying	revolution

Your students may think of other ways not listed here.

After the students have completed their lists, ask them to rank them in order by number. Which would they use first and why? Ask students to look for common characteristics. After some discussion, students should be able to see that these methods fall into four classes of dissent.

1. Legal: ask students to identify all legal forms of dissent.

2. Nonviolent illegal: civil disobedience.

3. Violent illegal: property destruction, personal injury.

4. Revolution and anarchy.

After identifying these classes, ask students about the need or wisdom of using #2, #3, or #4. Discuss the wisdom and the results of using the democratic process, the advantages, disadvantages. The obvious advantage of the democratic process is that it allows for orderly, evolutionary change. For a different method of encouraging this discussion, see the Appendix, page 36.

At this point, return to the discussion questions on the film. Discuss the merits of using the democratic process as opposed to violence. Question #9 should serve to lead into a discussion on voting. When the City Council fails to compromise, the next step is not violence but voting; elect those who will change the law. Obviously, there are times when elections will not bring results, but since the focal point is voting, this should be zeroed in on as a step to Section III.

*If the teacher wishes to, however, here is another opportunity for expanding the unit to cover the validity of civil disobedience and violence as they effect change. The civil rights movement and the draft controversy could be brought in at this point. Ultimately, however, discussion should center on the democratic process as the most legitimate means of effecting change under most circumstances. There is, of course, the American Revolution which does suggest another means. Students should see that revolution and violence are extremely costly and dangerous methods for effecting change and that democratic government, on the other hand, provides for a relatively safe and orderly way of effecting change.

SECTION III: HOW DO I BECOME INVOLVED?

In Section II we concluded that one of the effective ways to change the law is through the ballot. When governments fail to pass laws of which we approve, the obvious choice is to change those in office who make the laws. But when you receive your ballot on election day, what part have you had in determining whose name will appear there? Unless you are a member of a political party, you have little choice since most candidates for public office are chosen by political parties. It is also necessary for you to register as a member of a party before you can vote in partisan primary elections. It is in the party primary that the nominee is chosen to stand for election.

Part 1: Why Do We Have Political Parties?

Every year when students begin the study of political parties some student may ask: "But why do we have political parties? They aren't mentioned in the Constitution and several of the Founding Fathers, including George Washington, warned against the dangers of political parties. It seems to me that all parties do is fill the radio and TV waves with propaganda. Besides I can't see any difference in them anyway."

In spite of such questions, political parties continue to exist in this country and have been involved in every election since the election of 1792. In this activity, students will be given an opportunity to examine some of the reasons for the existence of political parties.

The purpose of the following questionnaire is to help students answer the question: why have political parties? A shorter quiz with the same purpose is included in the Appendix, page 39.

Student Opinion Questionnaire

In every society there are differences of opinion on important issues facing that society. What are your opinions on these issues? Choose the answer which best reflects your opinion.

1. Viet Nam
   (a) The U. S. is justified in being there.
   (b) The war is an immoral war; we should never have become involved.
   (c) My opinion is somewhere between a and b.

2. The U. S. needs troops to fight wars.
   (a) The draft is legal; all men should be willing to serve.
   (b) To serve in the military is a matter of conscience; each person should be allowed to decide for himself.
   (c) My opinion lies somewhere between a and b.

3. In a democracy, the people rule.
   (a) Voting is not for all people, but only for those who are mature adults, 21 and over.
   (b) Eighteen year olds are eligible for the draft; they are therefore mature enough to vote.
   (c) Undecided.

4. A democracy depends upon the education of its citizens.
   (a) Adults with greater experience and education should make educational decisions for youth.
   (b) Students should have the freedom to choose what they want to learn and when they will learn.
   (c) My opinion lies somewhere between a and b.

5. Many Americans' income falls below the level which most Americans feel provides for an adequate living.
   (a) Men by their initiative and drive or lack of it deserve the position in which they find themselves.
   (b) Government ought to use its powers and resources to assist those who have not achieved economic success.
   (c) Undecided.

6. America suffers from a rising crime rate.
   (a) Capital punishment and a crackdown, "get tough" policy with criminals is the best way to deter crime.
   (b) Criminals are a product of society. The best way to deter crime is to solve the economic and social problems which create crime.
   (c) My opinion lies between a and b.

7. A common feeling of identity and a sense of purpose are important to a nation's survival.
   (a) Parents, the school, the church should make decisions for youth and teach them proper attitudes.
   (b) Each person should decide for himself what is moral or immoral. Parents, schools, and churches have no right to impose their views on you.
   (c) My opinion lies between a and b.

8. The Nation has economic ills.
   (a) President Nixon was within his proper authority to freeze prices and wages and suspend contracts.
   (b) The President has exceeded his power in the wage-price freeze.
   (c) Undecided.

9. Recently the U. S. has discussed the possibility of extending diplomatic ties to Red China.
   (a) We should never recognize a country which uses force and violence and advocates revolution.
   (b) The Chinese government controls 800 million people. It is realistic to recognize them as the legitimate government of China. After all, they have controlled the mainland since 1949. We, too, established our government through revolution.
   (c) Undecided.

Teacher's Guide to be Used with Student Opinion Questionnaire

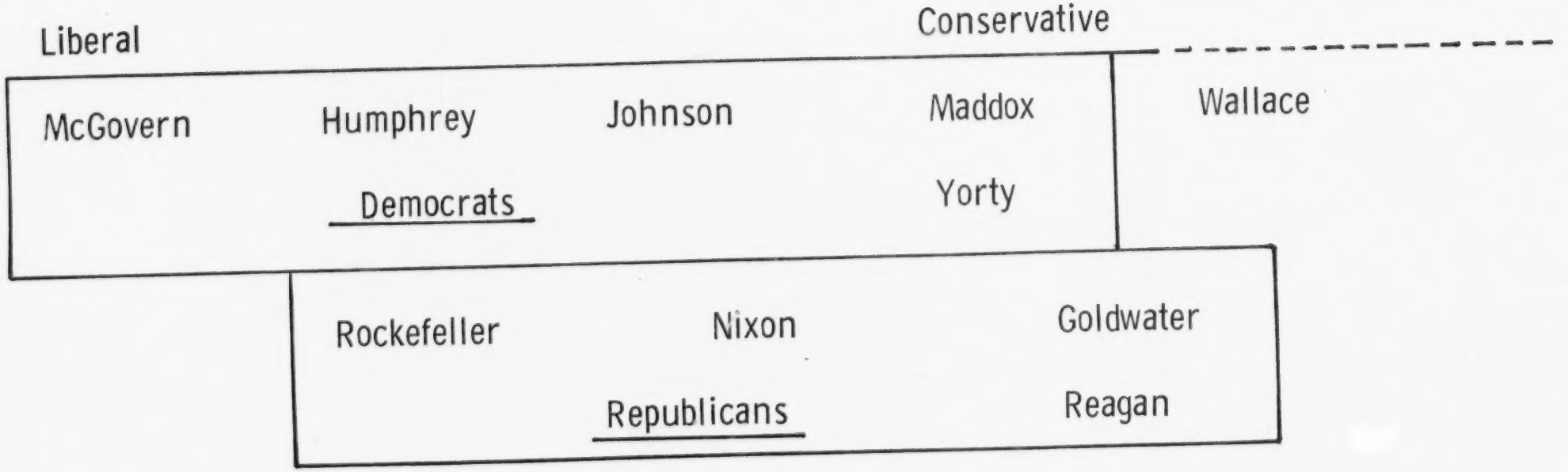
1. Begin by tabulating the results of the questionnaire on the board.
   (a) Choices are Conservative
   (b) Choices are Liberal
   (c) Choices are Moderate or Undecided

   The composite results will show students how the class is divided on these issues.

2. Now have the students discuss the significance of their tabulations.
   (a) Why do these differences appear?
   People have differences of opinion.
   (b) What causes these differences?
   A variety of factors can be identified, such as race, locale, age, sex, social class, etc.
   (c) What are the common characteristics of the "A" choices? Do they reflect a trend? Compare them with the "B" choices. Do the "B" choices reflect a trend?
   Students may see that "A" choices are conservative, and "B" choices liberal. At this point it will be necessary to define these terms carefully.
   (d) Suppose you opposed the recognition of Red China by the U. S. What could you do to prevent it?
   This discussion might produce a variety of answers, but eventually discussion should arrive at the need for group action. At this point relate back to political parties. Parties are the result of people of like mind organizing for group action; they are inevitable in a democratic society.
   (e) How do the terms Conservative and Liberal relate to the parties we have today--Republican, Democrat, American Party, Socialist Party?

Allow the discussion to proceed before projecting the transparency on the political spectrum. The chart on the following page should serve as a natural lead-in to a discussion of our two-party system. Perhaps the chart could be reproduced as a transparency. The chart is not necessarily complete. As new candidates appear, the students might be asked where they think the newcomer should be placed on the chart.

U. S. POLITICAL SPECTRUM



*For those who wish to expand the unit, here is an opportunity to study the evolution of our party system and examine basic party functions in depth.

Part 2: Understanding Political Parties

Since the students have now had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for political parties, they should be prepared for a close look at their local party structure and its relationship to the state and national party structure. This examination of the parties can be achieved by inviting party representatives to the school as guest speakers. It could also be accomplished through class discussion, with the research into party structure and philosophy being done by the students.

A. Visits by Party Representatives

Step 1: Contact representatives of the major political parties in your county. An attempt should be made to bring the party representatives together with the Social Studies Department Chairmen of the county or district or with all of the government teachers of the community to provide for uniformity and to insure maximum party participation and interest.

Such a meeting would have a twofold purpose. First, party organization could be explained to the assembled teachers and questions could be answered regarding mechanics of party organization. A second purpose would be to arrange visits to senior high students prior to registration to explain party organization.

Please note: (It should be made clear to party representatives at this time that the purpose of their visits is to explain party organization. It should not provide representatives with a captured audience so they can propagandize their party virtues. Such a meeting should be instructive--not political.)

Step 2: Instructional Plans

(a) Plan 1. Members of both parties speaking to high school seniors in assembled classes. One class or three or more might meet in the library or other such available rooms.

(b) Plan 2. For larger schools or where flexibility of meeting places requires a single meeting. Speaking to entire senior assembly to explain party organization. (Estimated needed time--20 minutes.) Students may then be sent to their regular class, or written questions, submitted by the seniors the day before, can be answered before the entire group.

(c) Plan 3. Assemble all senior social studies students for inservice study of party organization.

Proposed visits should take place as early in the year as possible to give students time to reflect on how they can work within the party structure and to encourage registration.

B. Other Methods of Presenting Political Parties

As an alternative to party visitation and/or as a means of discussing party philosophy, the following structure is suggested. There are two suggested ways for presentation.

1. Divide the class into two designated groups--one Republican and one Democratic. These groups must automatically take on the supposed beliefs of their party and discuss these issues from that viewpoint.

2. The class may be seated in a circle, with the teacher presenting the topics for the debate, thus trying in each case to establish the general views and/or beliefs of each party.

Suggested Topics for Discussion: The issues listed are simply guidelines to acquaint the teacher with the topics desired. If more depth is desired for each topic, the students may be assigned further research.

(a) What has the Republican Party done towards abolishing the draft as compared to the Democrats in the last 2-4 years?

(b) Do you think the "Liberal Democrat" is more willing to increase welfare?

(c) How does the Democratic viewpoint on involvement with foreign countries differ from the Republican viewpoint?

(d) Do you think the Democrats tend to support labor whereas the Republicans support management?

(e) Which party gives more help to agriculture and the farmer?

(f) How does a Third Party affect the Republicans and Democrats in an election (e.g., George Wallace and the American Independent Party)?

The Political Analysis in the Appendix could be appropriate, used at the beginning of the class discussion. See page 40.

Part 3: Registering and Voting

This area of the minicourse is designed to give the students specific instructions on how to register and vote. Some of this information can best be given by visual means. In other instances class discussion will help the students understand the reasons for certain procedures. Use your own judgment.

A. Why register? What types of registration do we have?

Citizens register so that their election officials will know that they are qualified voters. Registration is simply an official record of the name, age, address, and length of residence of the citizen, and any additional information needed to prove eligibility to vote. Registration procedures were adopted to prevent abuses in balloting on election day.

There are two types of registration plans: periodic and permanent. Periodic registration involves registering and reregistering at stated intervals. If an individual does not reregister, he loses his right to vote.

Permanent registration enables the registrant to vote for life, unless he moves or changes name. There may be other modifications of the permanent system, such as removing a registrant's name from the list of registered voters if he fails to exercise his vote for a period of time.

In Nebraska, we use a modification of the permanent system. A citizen is registered for life unless he changes name, address, party identification, or fails to vote in two succeeding general elections. The local election official is either an Election Commissioner or the County Clerk (if there is not an Election Commissioner).

B. Qualification for Registration

Following are four lists which could be constructed as charts on transparencies to help explain the facts of registration. The fourth list will need to be adapted to your own local conditions.

1. YOU CAN'T VOTE! - - - -

unless you have registered.

2. YOU CAN VOTE

For President and Vice-President <u>if</u> you are at least 18 and a U. S. citizen.

In state and local elections if you are at least 18, a U. S. citizen, and have lived in the state for 6 months, the county for 40 days, and the precinct for 10 days.

If you are registered.

3. Registration is permanent unless:

A voter changes his or her name.

A voter wishes to change party identification.

A voter changes address.

A voter fails to vote in two succeeding general elections.

Who may register:

Any U. S. citizen who fulfills the age and residence requirements.

Naturalized citizens--on presentation of original naturalization papers.

4. When to register: (SAMPLE: Fill in the correct information for your locality)
Anytime up to 6:00 p.m. on the second Friday preceding the election.

Weekdays: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Before elections: as announced.

Where to register:

Election Commissioner's office in Douglas County Courthouse, 17th and Farnam Streets.

Before elections: as announced.

C. Special Cases for Registering and Voting

--If you will not be in town on election day you can vote (if you are registered).

1. By voting in person at the office of the Election Commissioner or County Clerk. Deadline for absentee voting is 12:00 noon on Saturday before the election.

2. By voting by mail. To do this you must write to the Election Commissioner or County Clerk for a ballot. You can do this as early as 90 days before the election. After filling out the ballot, you must sign it before a notary public and mail it back, postmarked not later than midnight the day before the election.

--If you are temporarily living away from home (student, military personnel, etc.) you may register by mail by writing to the Election Commissioner or County Clerk and requesting the proper forms to fill out and return. You may then vote by mail (see above).

--Students. Secretary of State Allen J. Beerman ruled that students can register and vote in any county they consider their residence.

"Residence" according to state law means "the established home. . .to which when he departs he intends to return." There must be "no intention of presently moving" from the residence although the person need not intend to stay there permanently.

The Election Commissioner or County Clerk may require evidence of residence to "satisfy a reasonable person that the registrant is entitled to vote."

--Disabled Voting. There are provisions in Nebraska law for disabled voting. Your Election Commissioner or County Clerk can provide specific details.

Part 4: Voter Registration in the Schools

A. Responsibilities of Principal and/or Staff

1. Principals and/or staff select one 18 year old student per 20 potential registrants to take registrations in their own schools. This might be a class project, a student council project, or volunteers may be taken by application.

2. Select a time period in which it would be suitable to conduct registration to correspond with the social studies course study of political parties or at the beginning of second semester.

3. Provide a suitable setting for students to register. Note that a counselor's office or the library are more suitable than a cafeteria. (An eight foot table and three students will be necessary during registration.)

4. Determine the hours you wish to make this service available--probably your normal school hours. Nebraska law requires the Election Commissioner or County Clerk to give legal notice since the public must be permitted to register to vote provided they will be 18 years old on or before May 9, 1972. Should anyone appear at your school during the registration days, the law requires that they be granted the right to register.

5. Students could be permitted to register during a suggested two-day period. Approximately three minutes are needed for a trained registrar. Students might be permitted to pass to the registration desk during study halls or social studies class.

B. Responsibilities of Election Commissioner or County Clerk

1. Conduct training sessions at the election office at the courthouse one or two days prior to the days of voter registration. Minimum length of training sessions is two hours.

2. Supply one experienced registrar to oversee the registration of voters.

3. Supply all material for registering.

C. Further Information

1. Students selected must be 18 years old, have legible handwriting, and be registered voters of your county. If not already registered to vote, they must do so before taking any other person's registration. It is required by law.

2. If possible, try to maintain an even split concerning the political affiliation of student registrars.

3. Please note: only people residing in your county may register to vote in your county.

4. A date should be selected for registration before the workload increases for the Election Commissioner. Perhaps January or February would be good since his workload generally increases after that date.

5. Students who are 17 years of age may register to vote provided they will be 18 years old on or before May 9, 1972.

D. Suggested Projects for Students to Assist in Voter Registration

1. Research Committee
   (a) To find out about the non-voter, non-registered group
   (b) Requirements for voting
   (c) What campaign techniques would apply to all

2. Publicity Committee
   (a) To inform the student of the registration drive by making posters, contracting TV and radio personnel, and general community advertising

3. Volunteers Committee
   (a) To seek out eligible 18 year olds to become volunteer registrars

Part 5: Other Registration Projects

A. Set registration at sports events, school carnivals, or any crowd-attending situation.

B. Register students in government or other classes, at school club meetings or any other organized function.

C. Working with school records of student birthdays, send cards to all who have or do turn 18, urging them to register.

D. Where possible, advertise in school papers encouraging students to register and informing them of your project.

E. Enlist help from the League of Women Voters and political parties.

F. Solicit support of your social studies department in the project since it is a valuable learning experience.

Be sure to do the following:

____Comply with all local legal election registration requirements to the letter.

____Clear in advance with all school officials anything you do that involves the school.

Part 6: Voting

A. The students may have questions about the actual mechanics of voting. After discussing their questions, you might pass out copies of the cartoons on the following two pages for them to keep. The cartoons should also prove a helpful guide to your discussion.

B. Suggestions for Additional Projects

--Take advantage of local, state, and national elections. A sample ballot would be helpful in enlivening this discussion.

1. How did _____ get his name on the ballot?

2. How do you read a ballot?

3. What part did the party play in determining which names appeared on the ballot?

4. How are propositions brought to the people?

--Obtain from local clerk's office, files of local press, or party records, for the last ten years, and see the number of voters for each party as compared with the number of eligible voters.

--Ask students to interview twenty people eligible for voting to ask their opinions on various candidates in the spring primary. Follow up with a discussion on the ways voters obtain information on the candidates. (See the Appendix for further suggestions of sources of information.)

--Appoint a panel with student participants representing different social and economic interests in the community and have them analyze the party platforms in the most recent national elections to show how well their interests are taken care of by each party. Ask each member to identify portions of the platform intended to appeal particularly to, or which are likely to affect, citizens of your own community, religion, or special interest.

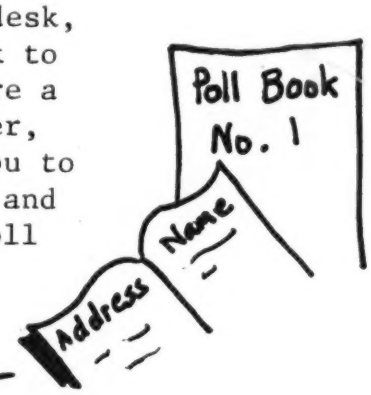
If You're A New Voter --

Perplexed about voting for the first time?

Here's some information about voting procedures you might like to know.

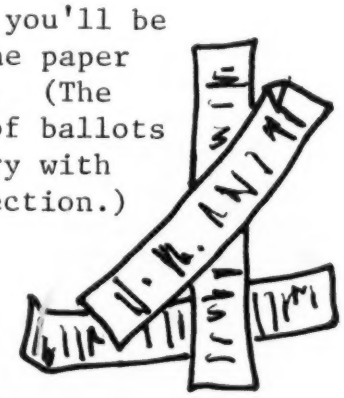
1

When you give your address and name to the clerks at the receiving desk, they will check to make sure you're a Registered Voter, and will ask you to sign your name and address in a Poll book.



2

Then you'll be given the paper ballots. (The number of ballots will vary with each election.)



3

Take all the ballots with you to the voting booth. (Of course you need vote only on the issues or for those candidates you wish.)

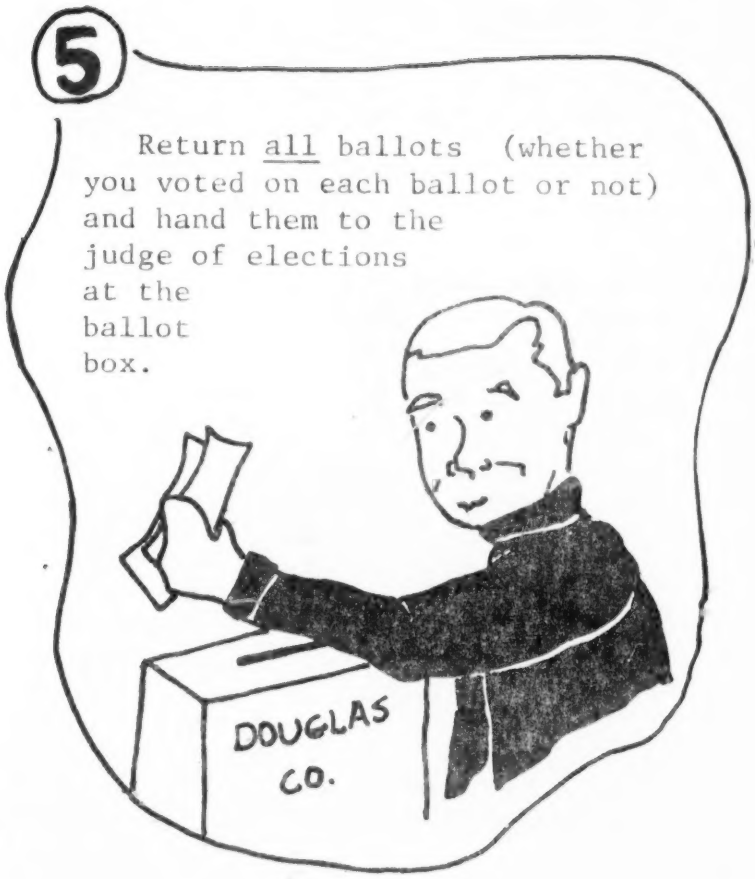
-MORE

4

After marking the ballots, fold them (separately!) in a manner so that the names of the judges of elections' signatures on the back of each ballot are visible.

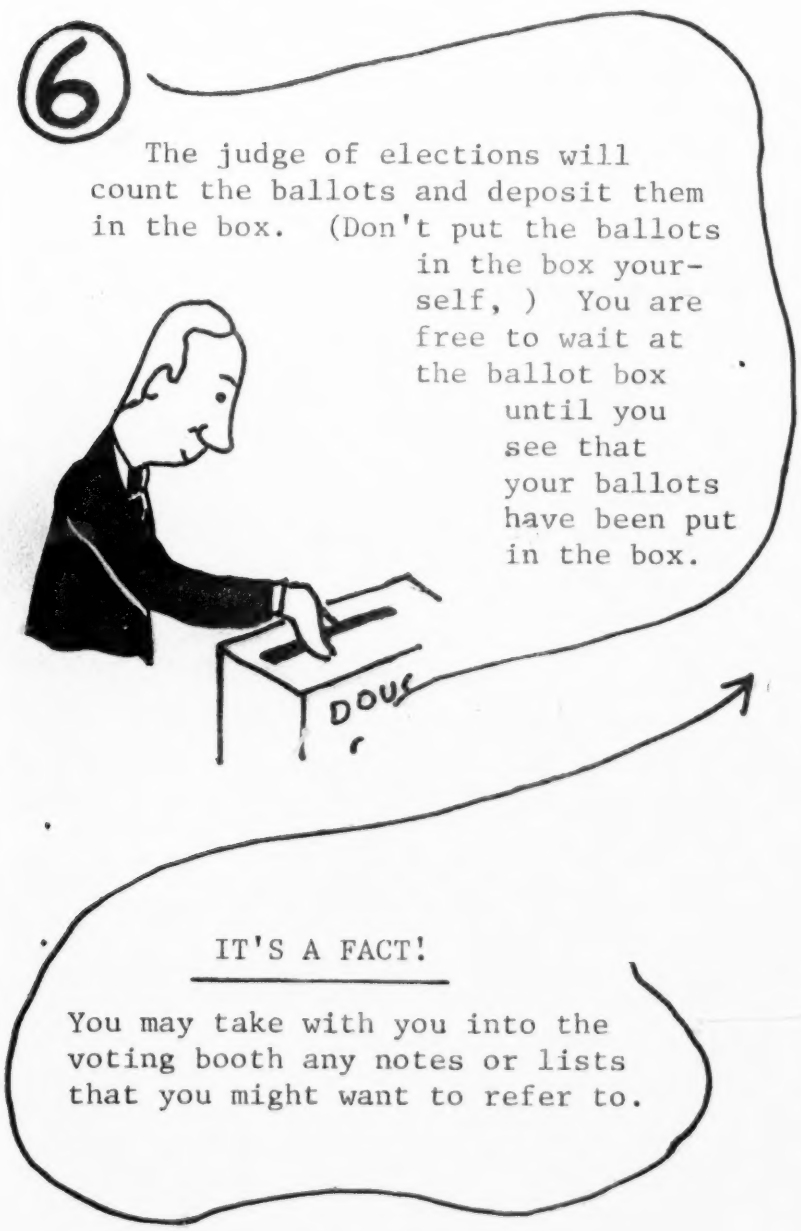
If you spoil a ballot, you may ask for a new ballot -- you're allowed up to four ballots. (Don't destroy the spoiled one.)

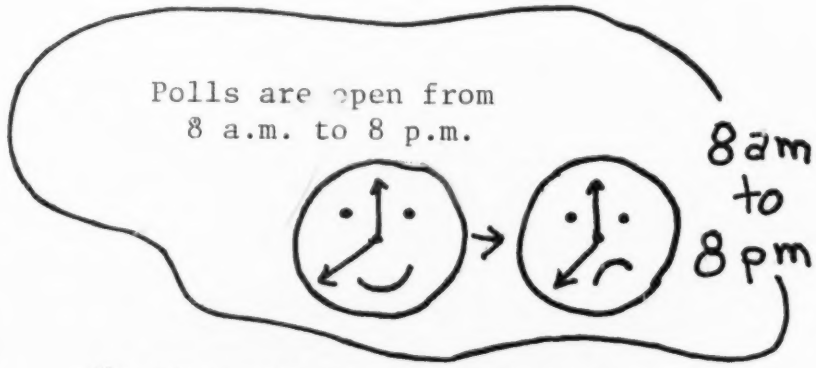
Every 2nd year (if you vote regularly) you'll receive a card in the mail giving you the address of your voting place. When you change your address, you should register again.


5
Return all ballots (whether you voted on each ballot or not) and hand them to the judge of elections at the ballot box.
DOUGLAS CO.

Then the ballot directs you to vote for a certain number of candidates, you may, if you choose, vote for fewer -- however, don't vote for a greater number than the ballot directs or your votes for that office will not be counted. (Your votes for other offices will still be good.)

The Election Commission urges voters to mark ballots with an "X". (Other types of marks are allowed if they are clear.)


6
The judge of elections will count the ballots and deposit them in the box. (Don't put the ballots in the box yourself,) You are free to wait at the ballot box until you see that your ballots have been put in the box.
IT'S A FACT!
You may take with you into the voting booth any notes or lists that you might want to refer to.



"Instruction to Voters" cards are placed in every booth.

You cannot take a ballot out of the polling room.

A voter may ask for help in marking his ballot if he cannot read, or is blind, or is physically handicapped so that he can't mark his own ballot. (A judge of elections and a clerk will help him.)

Courtesy - Urban Action

C. How can one vote make any difference?

1960 Presidential Election	John F. Kennedy barely topped Richard M. Nixon with a national plurality of 112,253 votes out of almost 69 million cast--a margin of less than <u>one</u> vote per precinct.
Classic Example	Maraus Morton was elected Governor of Massachusetts in 1839 by <u>one</u> out of 102,066 cast.
Wisconsin	One vote in a city ward elected a City Councilman in 1963. Winner, 401; loser, 400.
Virginia	Three votes per precinct elected a representative to Congress in 1962. The election was won by 343 votes in 131 precincts.

"Just one vote" can mean an election. Your vote makes you a member of America's only "ruling class."

EVALUATION

As the teacher, you would undoubtedly benefit from an evaluation of this unit. We, also, would appreciate any feedback from the teacher and the students that would enable us to improve upon this packet. Included below are two final activities which we believe are compulsory.

1. Please give each student the following questionnaire at the time the unit has been completed.

    1. What did you find most useful in the course?
    2. In what way was it useful?
    3. What additional material would you like to have covered:
        a) in this course?
        b) in subsequent courses?
    4. Do you plan to make use of the knowledge gained in this course in some specific activity? What type?
    5. What did you find least useful in the course?
    6. What changes would you recommend in conducting this course?

YOU DO NOT NEED TO SIGN YOUR NAME

Now, as the classroom teacher, we ask that you write a brief summary of the comments made by the students on questions 1-6. You may also include a separate evaluation of your own if you wish. Please send your summary evaluation to:

Ed Walker, Consultant
Social Studies
Nebraska State Department of Education
233 South 10th
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

2. Certainly, the most desirable student behaviors can be said to begin at the conclusion of the course. If the learning activities have been viable, the student will want to participate in community affairs. If the student is interested he may contact the following organizations:

    1. Nebraska Democratic Party - 311 Anderson Building, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

    2. Nebraska Republican Party - 212 Anderson Building, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

    3. Nebraska League of Women Voters - 1614 N Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

As the teacher, you may wish to provide local party or League of Women Voters addresses. Also, you might wish to include interest groups such as environmentalists, NFO, etc.

APPENDIX

NARRATION OF FILM: CHANGING THE LAW

Narrator: We are surrounded by laws. How permanent are these laws? Can they be changed? How should a citizen react to a law he feels needs changing?

(A police patrol unit responds to a radio report of disturbances on the beach.)

Sgt.: What's the problem, Tim?

Lifeguard: Sergeant, we're having trouble with the new surfing ordinance.

Sgt.: That's what I thought. Okay, people. Hold it down, just hold the noise down, just hold it down.

(Quiets crowd)

Lifeguard: We still have a surfer in the water.

Sgt.: Okay, let's get the P.A. system and get him out.

Sgt.: May I have your attention. May I have your attention. You are in violation of the surfing ordinance. There is no surfing on this beach after 11 o'clock. There is no surfing on this beach after 11 o'clock. You will have to come into the shore immediately. I want you into the beach immediately. If you do not come into the beach immediately, we will send a patrol boat out after you.

(Surfer comes ashore)

Surfer: What's the problem?

Sgt.: What's your name?

Surfer: I want to know why you are confronting me.

Sgt.: The problem is that there is no surfing on this beach after 11 o'clock.

(Murmur from crowd)

Surfer: Hey, I've been surfing here for over a year now. There's never been anything like that.

Sgt.: The sign over here says there's no surfing on this beach after 11 o'clock.

Surfer: I didn't see any sign.

Sgt.: You had to pass it on the way to the beach. Now, what's your name?

Surfer: I didn't see any sign.

Sgt.: What's your name?

Surfer: My name is Todd.

Sgt.: Todd what?

Surfer: Todd McKinley

Sgt.: Where do you live, Todd?

Surfer: I live on Third Street.

Sgt.: Third Street where?

Surfer: Third Street here.

(Crowd laughs)

Sgt.: Where's here, Todd?

Surfer: Seal Beach.

Sgt.: Todd, last Monday night, the City Council passed an ordinance stating that there is no surfing on this beach after 11 o'clock.

(Shouts from crowd)

Surfer: No one told us about it. No one told us anything about it.

Sgt.: The meeting was open to the public, and you could have attended, if you'd wanted to.

Surfer: Oh, the public, you know what the public thinks of surfers, they wouldn't have made it any different.

Sgt.: They've given you five hours on weekdays now to surf.

(Shouts from crowd)

Surfer: They've given us five hours. Five hours is not enough time to surf. You can't even paddle in and paddle out in five hours. Five hours is not enough!

Sgt.: Look, you know why they passed this ordinance. They passed this ordinance on account of the vandalism, the petty thefts.

(More shouting)

Sgt.: That's why they passed the ordinance.

Surfer: This used to be an open beach. We used to be able to surf everywhere around here. Then you restricted it down to one area.

Sgt.: It's still one of the best surfing areas.

Surfer: That doesn't make any difference. We used to be able to surf here for 24 hours a day. Now you guys put it down to five hours a day, next month it will be four hours a day, the month after that two hours a day, then we won't have any time to surf. You just want us off the beach.

(More shouting from crowd)

Sgt.: Look, if enough of you don't like this ordinance, you can have it changed.

Surfer: There is only one way we can change the laws, there's only one way we can make you listen to us.

(More shouting)

Sgt.: All right, let's move along. Let's! Get them out of here.

(More shouting, kids disperse.)

(Surfer slows traffic and riots.)

Policeman: You kids turn around and place your hands on the wall.

Surfer: Don't touch me.

Policeman: Get your hands on the wall.

Surfer: All right, man. Come on. Hey.

(Police car drives out with arrested surfers.)

Policeman: Okay, you can all step back to the police unit now.

Girl: Yes, but I think the police were brutal in the way they handled it. I don't think they had any right to act that way. I think it is another case of police brutality.

Interviewer: I understand some property damage was done, how do you feel about that?

Girl: Oh, yes, but I mean when you are a group that no one will listen to, there is only one way you can make yourself heard, and they tell us not to riot or cause damage, but that's the only way we can make them understand. I mean, I think human values are more important than property values, anyway.

Interviewer: Since you are a lifeguard here in the city of Seal Beach, you know most of the surfers involved in last night's trouble, don't you?

Lifeguard: Yes, I do. And most of them are good kids, and not trouble-makers. I understand a number of arrests were made. I'm sorry this happened.

Interviewer: How do you personally feel about the surfing ordinance which began it all?

Lifeguard: I am sure there are good reasons for this new ordinance, and I'll have to enforce it because that's part of my job. But I can understand the kids' positions too. They have been restricted to this section of the beach and now have been limited to certain hours. The kids feel they're losing out here, too. I think the whole situation is very unfortunate as far as I'm concerned.

Interviewer: We have here Chief Case of the Seal Beach police department. Chief Case, the conduct of the police last night has been criticized by some people. How do you feel about it?

Chief: A police department anticipates a certain amount of criticism when events occur as occurred last night. It is my opinion that the officers performed as they should perform under the circumstances which presented themselves. The community wants us to protect their property and preserve law and order, and that is exactly what the officers did last night. As long as I am the chief of police in this city, we are going to preserve law and order.

(Shots of riot)

A riot has occurred.

Damage has been done.

Arrests have been made.

But the law has not been changed.

Let's turn back the clock.

Let's imagine that violence never occurred.

Let's start over and see if there is another line of action the surfers could follow in an attempt to change the law.

(Back again on beach.)

Surfer: "Not enough."

Sgt.: If you don't like this ordinance you can have it changed.

Surfer: Us? Change the law?

Sgt.: That's right, you can have it changed.

(on street)

Boy: Excuse me, sir, could you sign our petition?

Girl: We are trying to revoke the surfing ordinance here in Seal Beach.

Boy: If we get enough signatures on this petition, we'll be able to bring a hearing.

Girl: . . . the City Council to get rid of all the surfing ordinances.

Boy: We'd appreciate it if you'd sign this.

Woman: No I don't care to sign. I'm for the ordinance.

Girl: Would you please sign?

Man: Sure I'd be happy to.

(CITY COUNCIL MEETING)

Mayor: The regular meeting of the Seal Beach Council will now come to order. Will yoy please follow me and pledge allegiance to the flag. All rise.

(crowd pledges allegiance)

Mayor: Roll call.

(Clerk calls roll.)

Mayor: Council's items, Mr. Reisner.

City Manager: Mr. Mayor, members of the Council, the first item before you is a hearing on proposed changes in the surfing regulations.

Mayor: Mr. Kearns, as City Attorney would you please conduct the public hearing.

City Attorney: Mr. Mayor, members of the Council, ladies and gentlemen of the audience, this is the time for a public hearing on proposed changes in the surfing regulations particularly relating to hours. We will offer in evidence a petition which purports to be signed by 1,263 people, residents of the city of Seal Beach, requesting a change in the surfing hours, and we also have approximately ten letters on the subject and we offer this evidence at this time. Mr. Reisner, as city manager, do you wish to introduce any evidence?

City Manager: Yes, Mr. City Attorney, we have Sgt. Gattey from the police department to present certain statistics and data concerning our problems on the beach with relation to surfing.

Sgt.: I have some statistics here which cover the past ninety days compared with the same ninety-day period a year ago. During the past few summers, the number of crimes occurring along our beaches has suddenly increased, and as a result surfers have been restricted to a quarter mile area of the west

beach; and shortly after the surfers were concentrated into this area, we found that our high crime rate problems involving the surfers were pinpointed in this area, and the hours of 11 am to 3 pm were especially the highest crime hours.

Restricting the surfing hours has produced the following results: auto burglaries have been reduced from 23 to 9. Thefts have gone from 123 to only 33. Truancy arrests fell from 17 to 0. Calls from citizens complaining of rowdy young people have dropped from 62 to 37. All in all, the crimes attributed directly to the surfers in the First Street beach area have been reduced in total from 284 to 95 in the ninety days that the ordinance has been in effect.

City Attorney: If there is anyone in the audience who wishes to address the Council on the subject of surfing, will you kindly stand, give your name and your address.

Boy: My name is Andrew Rostein (?) I live at 3353 Redwood Avenue, Seal Beach. I am completely against this restrictive surfing ordinance. Mr. Mayor, members of the City Council, surfers are not the vandals and thieves that some make them out to be. In reality they are responsible citizens who have helped our community by bringing business into it. The law as it stands right now restricts surfing from the majority because of the lawlessness of but a few, and they aren't even surfers. This restriction of the majority is not in keeping with the democratic principles laid down in our government by our forefathers. This law should be completely revoked.

Man: Mr. Mayor, city councilmen, my name is Art Sarew and I live at 3489 Rosewood Avenue, Seal Beach. I am definitely in favor of this ordinance. As a matter of fact, since it has passed, things have been a little better, but not enough to suit me. There still is too much vandalism going on. There's a lot of trampling in our rose gardens, they don't care at all about our garbage cans, they throw them over, turn them over, our clothes lines are torn down, our clothes are ripped and there is not regard whatsoever for our property rights, so I defintely am in favor of this ordinance. As a matter of fact, I personally would like to see surfing abolished completely.

Woman: Frances Parks, 4059 Stone Avenue, Seal Beach. City Council, Mr. Mayor, my feeling about this ordinance is that it is unconstitutional. It violates the individual's right to assemble peaceably with other individuals. What you are really saying to the surfers is that they cannot come together to do their surfing peacefully because they might attract crowds in which might be individuals who might commit crimes. Anytime you have a gathering or a crowd of people, you are going to have crimes committed, but this has never given a government the right to refuse the people the right to assemble peaceably. I think essentially you're protecting the rights of the property owners at the expense of the constitutional rights of other individuals, in this case the surfers and the spectators.

Boy: Verne Newland, 2206 Strongs Drive, Seal Beach. Your Honor, City Council. I am a surfer and I have been one for a number of years. A

little over a year ago, I had a surfboard stolen from the roof of my car while I was parked down at the beach. Twice during the year I had my car broken into, and once I lost $40. As far as I am concerned, I am willing to accept the restrictions placed on surfing, if it means I am not going to lose any more boards or money.

Councilman Hamilton: Mr. Mayor, I move that this City Council give relief to our surfers. I believe our present ordinance is arbitrary and discriminatory. Our surfers bring favorable publicity to our city and business. Mr. Mayor, I move that our present ordinance be rescinded and the surfers be allowed to surf all day.

Councilman Murphy: Mr. Mayor, I agree with Mr. Hamilton. I think there should be no restrictions on surfing and I'd like to second this motion.

Mayor: It has been moved and seconded. Discussion. Mr. Grumire?

Councilman Grumire: I can remember a few years ago, before we had our present ordinance that we encountered a great deal of vandalism and other problems by the surfers; and since we have put into effect the ordinance we now have, those problems have been largely reduced. The police reports show that statement is true, and I believe it would be unwise for this council to open this surfing situation up, and we should retain our ordinance in its present form.

Mayor: Mrs. Dreis?

Councilman Dries: I agree with Mr. Grumire, and I am opposed to getting rid of the restrictions on surfers.

Mayor: I personally think this ordinance has been very successful in that it has kept our beaches in order. I was on the council when we passed this ordinance, and I can't see why we should rescind it. Is there any other discussion? We'll have roll call now.

(They vote)

Mayor: The motion has been defeated, three to two.

Murphy: Mr. Mayor, I think a compromise can be reached on this issue. I would like to inquire from Mr. City Manager as to what the hours are now under the present surfing regulations.

City Manager: Councilman, the present regulations restrict the hours of surfing from 8 to 11 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. during week days and between the hours of 8 and 11 a.m. on weekends.

Murphy: Thank you.

Mr. Mayor, as has happened so many times, we on the City Council are presented with two different points of view. On the one hand, we heard from a citizen who would like to abolish surfing completely. On the other, one of our own members proposed that we allow surfing 24 hours a day. Now I am sure we can reach a compromise somewhere between these two extremes. Twelve hundred people, a substantial portion of the voters in this city, have signed a petition indicating that they want a change in this ordinance, and I believe

that it is our responsibility to reach a compromise here.

Grumire: Mr. Mayor, I'm not opposed to some type of a compromise. I think the police reports show that our main problem time is from 11 a.m. to 2 or 3 in the afternoon.

Murphy: And Councilman Grumire, these just happen to be the worst surfing hours because of the wind factor. In fact, the best surfing hours are early in the morning and late evening hours when there's usually little wind. So I suggest, in fact, I move that we extend the hours of surfing from 8 to 11 a.m. to 7 to 11 a.m., and that on week days we allow surfing from 3 p.m. to sundown. This is a compromise that I feel accommodates the interests of the surfers and still preserves law and order on our beaches.

Hamilton: I second that motion.

Mayor: I think this compromise is okay, if it doesn't work we can always go back to the old ordinance. I am very much in favor of this. Is there anybody who wishes to discuss this? We'll have roll call now.

(they vote)

Mayor: The motion to extend the hours of surfing has been carried five to nothing.

Narrator: Law is not static. It can be changed. We have seen two different approaches to changing a law. Why was this attempt successful?

Additional Activities:

The following political cartoons are good ways to get student discussion. They can be used to supplement the discussion on methods of change or to recap the discussion or to introduce the concept of violence and change.

#1. This cartoon asks the searching question, "Will violence bring change or only produce more violence?"

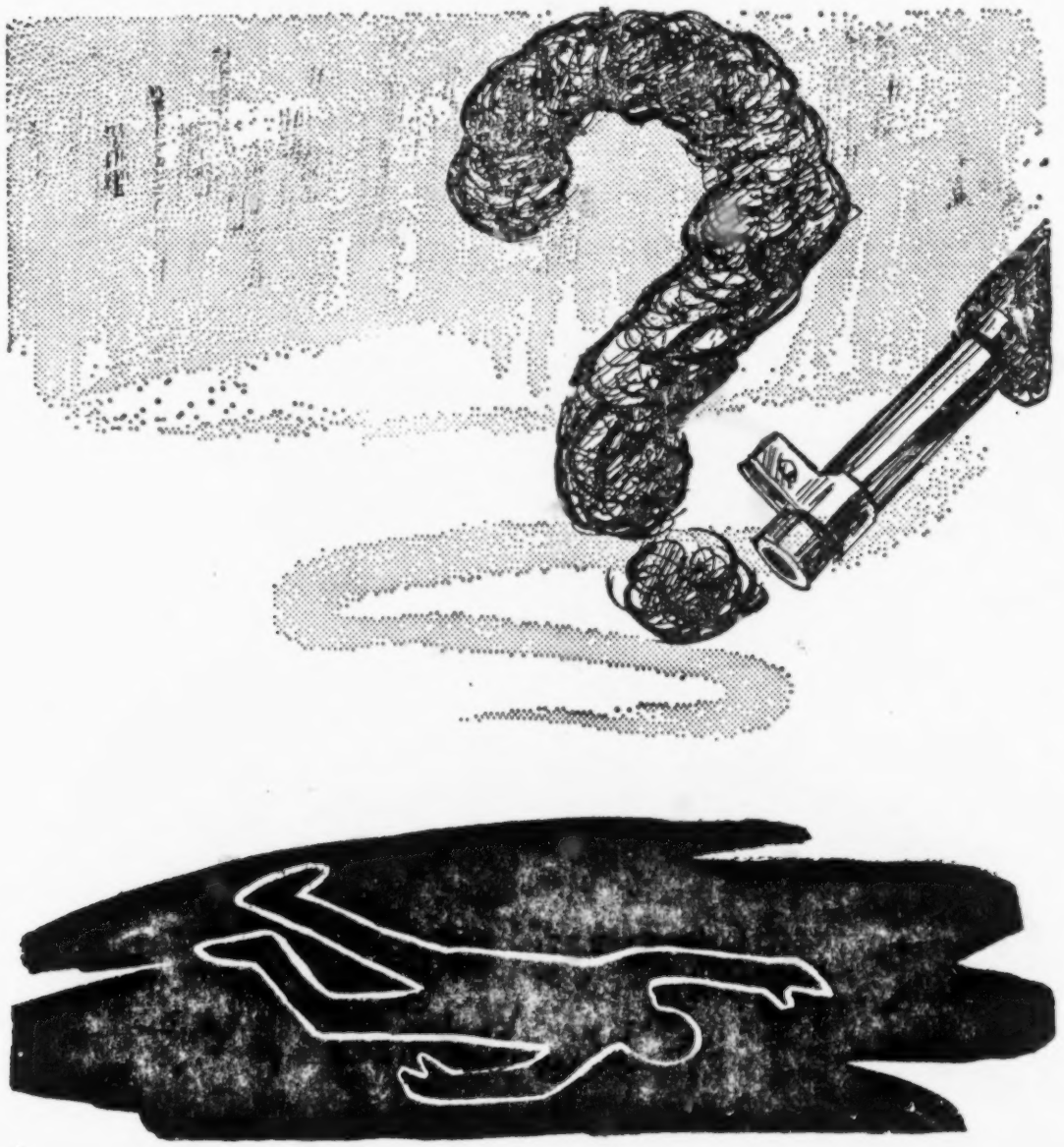
#2. This cartoon asks several questions:

A. What happens to the rights of the people (democratic process) when extremists use violence?

B. What happens when society will not any longer tolerate the violent dissent of the left? (Suppression at the cost of loss of civil liberties.)

This cartoon can also serve to introduce the concepts of liberal and conservative, left and right. These are terms which will become useful in discussing political parties later in the unit.

Where Can It End?



#1

Hastings Tribune, May 23, 1971

To the teacher: This transparency master complements this week's Critical Issues article on political polarization. Please see teaching guide for suggested use.

TRANSPARENCY MASTER #SR-217
TO BE USED WITH SEPT. 14, 1970, SENIOR SCHOLASTIC

DON'T THEY EVER LOOK BEHIND THEM?

Adapted from Pierotti (Ben Roth Agency)

T 2

#2

Designing a Questionnaire to Classify Political Ideology

The following are sample items and a scoring key for a questionnaire designed to identify liberal and conservative students. You are now to construct five additional items that would be appropriate for this questionnaire. Remember to include a scoring key. Your items will be combined with those of other students, and the completed questionnaire will be administered to the class. When everyone has finished, the class should discuss the results.

1. Businesses in the United States are much too closely regulated by the federal government.

   Agree No Opinion Disagree

2. The best solution to crime and violence in the cities would be to double the size of the police force and crack down on criminals.

   Agree No Opinion Disagree

3. The United States should increase its non-military aid to foreign countries.

   Agree No Opinion Disagree

Scoring Key

Question No.	Agree	Disagree
1	Conservative	Liberal
2	Conservative	Liberal
3	Liberal	Conservative

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Personal Political Analysis

1) At this time do you consider yourself a

____a. Democrat ____c. Independent

____b. Republican ____d. Other: _____

2) Why?

____a. Because my parents belong to this party.

____b. Because my parents do not belong to this party.

____c. Because I consider myself "liberal" in my political beliefs.

____d. Because I consider myself "conservative" in political beliefs.

____e. Because I agree with the philosophy of one of this party's candidates.

____f. Other: _____

3. What do you look for in a candidate? Check in order of importance:

____a. Honesty ____f. Sex

____b. Likeability ____g. Political platform

____c. Appearance ____h. Attitude towards opponent

____d. Religion ____i. His past record

____e. Race or nationality ____j. Others: _____

4. If you don't completely agree with the candidate of your party, what will you do?

____a. Vote for the other party if you like their candidate more

____b. Not vote

____c. Vote for your party's man in hopes that he will do a good job

____d. Other _____

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

Information on candidates and issues is most easily accessible through the media. Television, radio, newspapers, and other periodicals follow candidates and the issues involved in an election for months prior to the actual balloting, and the interested citizen may keep well informed. A distorted view of a race may be gained if an individual only reads or watches the news the last few days of a campaign; an earlier statement made in the campaign may be quite important.

There are other sources of information which help the citizen obtain even more complete information on a candidate. Non-partisan groups, such as the League of Women Voters, provide objective material on the various candidates, and other issues, such as constitutional amendments.

Special interest groups (for example, ecology groups) also have material available, although this information will perhaps be biased along the group's special interest. In addition, the information may be limited to only one issue, while a voter needs to understand a broader scope of the concerns involved.

Candidates' meetings are another very helpful way of observing the people running for office. Candidates from both parties appear together, speaking briefly and answering questions from the audience. This personal observation of a candidate may give a completely different impression from the 30-second spot television. This type of program also enables the citizen to obtain direct answers to his own questions.

A final source of information on candidates is available through the parties themselves. While it is certainly true that the information from a party will emphasize the outstanding attributes of its candidate, a discerning citizen can still gain additional knowledge that will help him vote intelligently.

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When You Write to Washington. League of Women Voters of the U. S. #349. 35¢.